



PRESS RELEASE

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NUS medical school names new professorship after George and Jennifer Yeo

Inaugurated on 30 August, the George and Jennifer Yeo Professorship in Paediatric Oncology will be vested at the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, National University of Singapore and ultimately help to bring about better cure rates for children with cancer in Singapore and beyond

Singapore, 30 August 2023 — The Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, National University of Singapore (NUS Medicine) today announced the establishment of a professorship named for two extraordinary Singaporeans, a husband and wife whose separate achievements find common ground in the common good and benefits that have resulted. One championed and laid the foundations for Singapore's standing and success as a bastion of free trade. The other, moved by their own child's struggle with childhood cancer, helped pave the way for greater research into childhood cancers and mobilised multiple partners to create an organisation that is helping to treat and save the lives of child cancer patients in Singapore and elsewhere.

The **George and Jennifer Yeo Professorship in Paediatric Oncology** honours this extraordinary husband and wife team: their individual, separate, visionary, dogged labour in their respective areas invigorated Singapore's international diplomacy and vastly expanded its trading horizons, and brought renewed hope to parents and their cancer-stricken children. The Professorship that bears their names is a testament to their enduring, visionary spirit, transforming what is imagined and possible into enduring reality.

The latest in a series launched to recognise outstanding Singaporeans, the Professorship will be vested at NUS Medicine and ultimately help to bring about better cure rates for children with cancer in Singapore and beyond. It will recognise leaders in Medicine and public health policy, and catalyse the formation of partnerships with experts from various disciplines to address cancer and other healthcare challenges of the day, and also spur important discourse to improve the practice of healthcare to serve the population in Singapore and beyond. At the same time, the Professorship will help to train the next generation of leaders in paediatric oncology to forge partnerships with experts from various disciplines to comprehensively tackle unique challenges in this area.

"I hope this professorship will help NUS build up its capability in paediatric oncology and help VIVA Foundation do more for children with cancer in Singapore and ASEAN," said Mr George Yeo.

"I am very honoured, and I thank Professor Chong Yap Seng, the Dean of the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, National University of Singapore, and the donors, who have made this endowed chair possible. As the mother of a childhood cancer survivor, I hope that this

professorship will lead to new cures and breakthrough therapies for childhood cancer, whilst ensuring that survivors live longer, healthier, and happier lives,” said Mrs Jennifer Yeo.

Professor Chong Yap Seng, Lien Ying Chow Professor in Medicine, Dean of NUS Medicine, said, “While 50 per cent of the world’s burden of childhood cancer reside in Asia, only 20 per cent are cured. Although the situation in Singapore is much less dire, with eight in every 10 Singaporean children with cancer cured, more remains to be done.” He added, “We are pleased to work with Mr George Yeo and Mrs Jennifer Yeo on this new professorship which will not only enable NUS Medicine to attract some of the world’s leading academics to further advance medical research and education and transform the practice of medicine in Singapore and beyond—it will also lead the training of the next generation of leaders in paediatric oncology to improve childhood cancer outcomes globally.”

Making free trade Singapore’s lifeblood

Mr Yeo served 23 years in the Singapore government from 1988 to 2011. As Minister for Information and the Arts, Health, Trade & Industry, and Foreign Affairs, he was at the forefront of Singapore’s pro-active pursuit of bilateral free-trade agreements (FTA) to form the building blocks towards the greater goal of a global proliferation of liberal global trading system. With him at the helm of the trade and industry portfolio, Singapore signed groundbreaking agreements with New Zealand, Japan, Australia and United States; and when he headed the foreign affairs portfolio, he continued to lobby for Singapore’s strategic agreements with China, India, Korea and other important regions. Of the 15 bilateral FTA that Singapore currently has, 10 were signed during his time in office; and of the 12 regional agreements that Singapore has, eight had their first Trade in Goods agreements signed while he was the Minister for Trade & Industry, and Foreign Affairs. Through his efforts, Singapore was able to anchor much of the global and regional partners’ interest in ASEAN and turned Southeast Asia into one of the few places in the world where disparate global powers with competing interests could meet as dialogue partners on what he used to describe as our “tropical and balmy shores”.

Bringing new life to paediatric oncology research and treatment

An advocate and solicitor admitted to the Singapore Bar and a Solicitor of England and Wales with about 40 years standing, Mrs Jennifer Yeo has represented a diverse group of individual clients and corporations in matters ranging from estate planning and administration, family law and mediations to real estate deals, corporate and banking transactions, and litigation.

However, the deep, personal insight into the difficulties that paediatric cancer poses to children and their parents that Mrs Yeo gained while caring for her own cancer-stricken son made her realise the pressing need for better understanding of cancer and better access to cancer treatment. It galvanised her to push for greater research into the disease and saw her partnering like-minded allies to found the Viva Foundation for Children with Cancer in 2006, where she serves as pro-bono Executive Director and dedicates her time and effort to education and research in paediatric oncology.

Mrs Yeo, herself a cancer survivor, received the Business China Award in 2021 in recognition of her mission and vision to save lives of children with cancer in Singapore and China while making significant social impact in China.

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About National University of Singapore (NUS)

The National University of Singapore (NUS) is Singapore's flagship university, which offers a global approach to education, research and entrepreneurship, with a focus on Asian perspectives and expertise. We have 16 colleges, faculties and schools across three campuses in Singapore, with more than 40,000 students from 100 countries enriching our vibrant and diverse campus community. We have also established our NUS Overseas Colleges programme in more than 15 cities around the world.

Our multidisciplinary and real-world approach to education, research and entrepreneurship enables us to work closely with industry, governments and academia to address crucial and complex issues relevant to Asia and the world. Researchers in our faculties, research centres of excellence, corporate labs and more than 30 university-level research institutes focus on themes that include energy; environmental and urban sustainability; treatment and prevention of diseases; active ageing; advanced materials; risk management and resilience of financial systems; Asian studies; and Smart Nation capabilities such as artificial intelligence, data science, operations research and cybersecurity.

For more information on NUS, please visit nus.edu.sg.

About the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (NUS Medicine)

The NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine is Singapore's first and largest medical school. Our enduring mission centres on nurturing highly competent, values-driven and inspired healthcare professionals to transform the practice of medicine and improve health around the world.

Through a dynamic and future-oriented five-year curriculum that is inter-disciplinary and inter-professional in nature, our students undergo a holistic learning experience that exposes them to multiple facets of healthcare and prepares them to become visionary leaders and compassionate doctors and nurses of tomorrow. Since the School's founding in 1905, more than 12,000 graduates have passed through our doors.

In our pursuit of health for all, our strategic research programmes focus on innovative, cutting-edge biomedical research with collaborators around the world to deliver high impact solutions to benefit human lives.

The School is the oldest institution of higher learning in the National University of Singapore and a founding institutional member of the National University Health System. It is one of Asia's leading medical schools and ranks among the best in the world (Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2023 by subject and the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings by subject 2023).

For more information about NUS Medicine, please visit <https://medicine.nus.edu.sg/>.